

***TOWN OF NEWFIELDS BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2008***

The meeting was called to order at 6:39pm. Selectmen present were: Wes Moore, James McIlroy, and Michael Woodworth. Others present were: Brian Knipstein (Road Agent), Police Chief Reed, Police Lt. Gould, Jackie Horgan, Jeff Buxton, Larry Arend, Peter Allen, Peggy Arend, Jack Arend, Katie Arend, Marianne Klemarczyk, Brian Cox, and Lynn Stollstorff.

Brian Knipstein reviewed his list of snow removal priorities with the Selectmen and explained that the Highway Department tries to have the sidewalks plowed before school starts, but it depends on the timing of the snowstorm. The Highway Department does not shovel snow at the elementary school, the fire department, or the library. Only the fire hydrants are shoveled. All other areas are plowed. The complete list is available at the Town Office for review.

The Selectmen had received a few complaints about the sidewalks not being plowed before school starts and Brian explained that he needs to wait until the State has finished plowing the highways and the residents have plowed or shoveled their driveways before plowing the sidewalks. He is happy to plow the sidewalks more often if the additional funds are added to the Highway Department Budget.

Chief Reed read a letter awarding Officer Stephen McAulay the "Chief's Achievement Award" for exceptional police work. Since Officer McAulay's graduation from the Police Academy last April, he has exceeded all other officers with the number of arrests and investigations. The Selectmen congratulated Officer McAulay.

Renewal part-time police officer appointments were signed for Officer Guy Philbrick and Officer Rainsford Dewart. Officer Lampi has resigned her full-time position with the Police Department. She is willing to work part-time as time permits.

The Lt. and Chief are interviewing 9-10 candidates for the open full-time position. Until this position is filled, the hours of coverage may be reduced because of a lack of manpower.

A discussion took place about the Police Department pay for the last two weeks of December. As the paycheck for that period of time was dated 01/02/08, it was taken from the 2008 budget. Chief Reed asked if the funds could be taken from 2007 as the wages were earned in 2007 and not budgeted for 2008. The Selectmen agreed to take the

funds from the 2007 budget (where the funds are available) in order to avoid overspending the 2008 budget.

Jackie Horgan, Jeff Buxton, Chief Reed, and Lt. Gould met with the Selectmen to discuss the findings of the Dispatch Advisory Committee. The conclusion of the Committee is to remain with Newmarket Dispatch instead of moving to Rockingham County Dispatch. A final report will be drafted and signed by the Committee members and given to the Selectmen in the near future.

A discussion took place with regard to the condition of the sidewalks after/during snowstorms which causes children to walk in the street to the elementary school or to the bus stop on Main Street. Larry Arend, Peggy Arend, Peter Allen, Marianne Klemarczyk, Brian Cox, and Lynn Stollstorff want the sidewalks to be a priority for plowing and a better job to be done when they are plowed so that the sidewalks may be used by the children especially when it is dark in the morning. The pathway between the Newfields General Store and Hemlock Court was also included in the discussion.

The Selectmen reviewed the list of plowing priorities from the Road Agent with the group. Members of the group asked that the sidewalks be moved up on the list.

Peggy feels the sidewalk plowing has been an issue for the last several years, not just last month. She has called the Town Office whenever she feels the sidewalks are not safe. Larry feels that Tom Conner did a better job with a different piece of equipment. He feels that machine being used now is too big to do a proper job. He also asked if a separate contractor could be hired to plow the sidewalks only. A separate contractor is not feasible at this time according to the Selectmen.

Peggy is advocating for her children and does not appreciate her concerns not being taken seriously. She does not want the Town to wait to take action on the issue until after someone is hurt or killed. Peter Allen asked about the Town's liability if someone should be hurt because of the condition of the sidewalks. The Town has no liability if the set procedures for snow removal are followed.

Wes said there is no way to completely eliminate snow on the sidewalks unless they are heated. There needs to be a balance between the resources and the cost. It is a personal choice for a parent to allow a child to walk in the street, on the sidewalks, drive that child to school, or keep the child home from school.

This issue is being taken seriously by the Selectmen and they will meet with the Road Agent next week to discuss again. They will discuss the option of a separate contract for the sidewalks and whether another machine can be used to stop further damage to walls, sidewalks, and lawns. They will also discuss the feasibility of having the sidewalks plowed by 6:00am when they are used by students to get to a school bus.

In the future, the Selectmen will field any complaints about the sidewalks. Wes stated that any resident may contact him directly with comments about the condition of the sidewalks. They are also encouraged to contact the Town Office if there are unsafe conditions or speak with the Officer on Duty if the Town Office is closed.

During the discussion a heated debate occurred between Selectmen Woodworth and a resident. The Chairman of the Board, in an attempt to regain control of the meeting, raised his voice and used his hand as a gavel.

Wes asked if the Selectmen want to put together a Warrant Article to earmark funds to repair the old Post Office Building so that it may be leased. The consensus is to wait another year.

The renewal contract with the NHSPCA for 2008 was signed.

Roseanne Gilbert asked for a refund on her registration. The Selectmen agreed with her request and a refund of \$161.00 will be sent to her.

The State of New Hampshire Department of Safety has requested that E9-1-1 Mapping Liaison Appointments be renewed. The Town will continue with Ray Buxton as the primary liaison and Scott Buxton as the secondary liaison.

A notice was received from the Barrington Planning Board regarding a Public Hearing on December 3rd, 2007 for a cell tower hearing.

Notice was received from Comcast that the prices will change beginning in February, 2008. A list of the new charges is available for review at the Town Office.

Scott Therrien's letter regarding damage to his mailbox will be forwarded to the Road Agent.

Correspondence from the Northeast Resource Recovery Association was reviewed.

The closeout report from the Rockingham Planning Commission on the Household Hazardous Waste Collection was reviewed.

The State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation correspondence regarding the Highway Block Grant Aid was reviewed.

Correspondence from Comcast regarding the available options to view the Patriots game on December 29th was reviewed.

The New Hampshire Retirement System correspondence advising the Town that the Penalty Waiver was approved was reviewed. The Town is still waiting for one additional Penalty Waiver to be approved.

Correspondence from Peter J. Loughlin, Attorney At Law and Mitchell & Bates, PA to the Town Auditors was reviewed.

The dedication of the 2007 Town Report was discussed.

Wes made a motion to accept the bid from Minuteman Press in the amount of \$2,114.00 for the printing of the 2007 Town Report. Michael seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor.

Correspondence from the Rockingham Planning Commission will be forwarded on to the Planning Board.

The procedure for posting meeting minutes was reviewed – minutes not approved by the Board of Selectmen are available at the Town Office five business days after the meeting was held per RSA 91-A:2. After minutes have been approved they are posted at the book at the Newfields Post Office, the book in the Town Office, and posted on the Town's website.

Wes made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 18th, 2007 meeting as amended. Michael seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor.

The Town Counsel's correspondence regarding the renewal Comcast Cable contract was reviewed and will be forwarded to Comcast with a request to make the agreed upon changes.

The 2008 Warrant Articles, Budget, and Default Budget were reviewed line by line and any necessary changes were made. Nancy Spencer will forward the revised copies of each item to the Selectmen for final review before the Budget Hearing on January 15th, 2008.

Wes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:40pm. James seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Spencer
Administrative Assistant